IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An absorbent polymer based on optionally partially neutralized, monoethylenically unsaturated monomers bearing acid groups, the surface of which polymer has been subjected to secondary crosslinking subsequent to polymerizing, wherein the polymer has cyclodextrins and/or cyclodextrin derivatives bound covalently and/or ionically thereto and/or incorporated therein.

2. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to claim 1, wherein the polymer includes from 0.01 to 50 wt.-% of cyclodextrins and/or cyclodextrin derivatives, relative to the polymer.

3. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to claim 1, wherein a maximum of 85 wt.-% of the amount of cyclodextrins and/or cyclodextrin derivatives in the polymer is extractable with water.

4. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to claim 3, wherein the amount extractable with water is 60 wt.-% at maximum.

5. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer is constituted up to 40 wt.-% of monoethylenically unsaturated monomers other than the monomers bearing acid groups.

6. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer has from 0.05 to 3 wt.-% of a crosslinking monomer incorporated by polymerization.

7. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer has 30 wt.-% of a water-soluble, natural or synthetic polymer incorporated therein by polymerization and/or graft polymerization.

8. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer has been subjected to surface crosslinking using from 0.1 to 10 wt.-%, relative to the polymer, of a crosslinker component.

9. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer contains α-, β-, or γ-cyclodextrins or derivatives thereof as cyclodextrins or derivatives thereof.

10. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are covalently bound to the polymer via ethylenically unsaturated groups.

11. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are tonically bound to the polymer via carboxylate, sulfate, sulfonate, or quaternary amino groups.

12. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to claim 11, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are bound to the polymer in a cationic fashion.

13. (Previously Presented) A process for producing the polymers according to Claim 1 by free-radical polymerization of an aqueous solution of the ethylenically unsaturated, optionally partially neutralized monomer bearing acid groups, optionally up to 40 wt.-% of further monoethylenically unsaturated comonomers, crosslinking monomers, and optionally up to 30 wt.-% of a water-soluble natural or synthetic polymer, optional isolation, crushing, and drying of the polymer, wherein the cyclodextrin and/or cyclodextrin derivative is already contained in the polymer during secondary surface crosslinking of same, or the polymer having undergone surface crosslinking is treated with an ionic cyclodextrin derivative.

14. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 13, wherein the cyclodextrin and/or cyclodextrin derivative is incorporated prior to or during polymerization of the monomers and/or applied on an optionally obtained hydrogel and/or on optionally milled and dried polymer prior to or during surface crosslinking of the polymer.

15. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 13, wherein the cyclodextrin or cyclodextrin derivative is employed as substance or as a solution.

16. (Previously Presented) Use of the polymers according to Claim 1 as an absorbent for aqueous liquids, preferably in absorbing body fluids, in optionally foamed sheet materials, in packaging materials, in plant breeding, and as soil improver.

17. (Previously Presented) The use of polymers according to claim 16 in hygiene articles.

18. (Previously Presented) Use of the polymers according to Claim 1 as a vehicle and/or stabilizer for active substances or fertilizers being released optionally in a delayed fashion.

19. (Currently Presented) The polymer according to Claim 2, wherein the polymer comprises from 0.1 to 30 wt.% of cyclodextrins, and/or cyclodextrin derivatives relative to the weight of the polymer.

20. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 2, wherein the polymer comprises from 0.5 to 10 wt.-% of cyclodextrins, and/or cyclodextrin derivatives relative to the polymer.

21. (Previously Presented) The polymer according to Claim 4, wherein the amount extractable with water is 45% at maximum.

22. (Previously Presented) A method of stabilizing an active substance, comprising absorbing the active substance with the polymer according to Claim 1.

23. (Previously Presented) An absorbent polymer composition comprising a polymer having polymerized units of one or more monoethylenically unsaturated monomers having one or more acid groups, and one or more cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, wherein the polymer is secondary surface crosslinked and wherein the cyclodextrins and the cyclodextrin derivatives are at least covalently bonded to the polymer, ionically bonded to the polymer or mixed with the polymer.

24. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymerized monoethylenically unsaturated monomer units are neutralized.

25. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 23, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are present in an amount of from 0.01 to 50 wt.%, relative to the weight of the polymer.

26. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, comprising from 0.1 to 30 wt.% of one or more cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, relative to the weight of the polymer.

27. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, comprising from 0.5 to 10 wt.% of one or more cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, relative to the weight of the polymer.

28. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 23, wherein at most of 85 wt.% of the cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, are extractable with water.

29. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 23, wherein at most 60 wt.% of the cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, are extractable with water.

30. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, wherein at most 45 wt.% of the cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both, are extractable with water.

31. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer comprises up to 40 wt.% of polymerized units of one or more monoethylenically unsaturated monomers other than the monoethylenically unsaturated monomers having acid groups.

32. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer further comprises from 0.05 to 3 wt.% of one or more crosslinking monomers bonded to the polymer.

33. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer comprises up to 30 wt.% of a water-soluble, natural or synthetic polymer, polymerized or graft polymerized to the polymer.

34. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer is a crosslinked polymer obtained by contacting the polymer with from 0.1 to 10 wt.% of a crosslinker component, wherein wt.% is relative to the weight of the polymer.

35. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the polymer comprises one or more α-, β-, or γ-cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives.

36. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are covalently bonded to the polymer by ethylenically unsaturated groups.

37. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 23, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are ionically bonded to the polymer by carboxylate, sulfate, sulfonate, or quaternary amino groups.

38. (Previously Presented) The composition of Claim 34, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are cationically bonded to the polymer.

39. (Previously Presented) A process for producing the composition of Claim 23, comprising

free-radical polymerization of an aqueous solution comprising one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers having acid groups, up to 40 wt.% of other monoethylenically unsaturated comonomers, and one or more crosslinking monomers to form a polymer,

isolating and drying the polymer, then

crosslinking the surface of the polymer to form a surface crosslinked polymer,

wherein one or more cyclodextrins, cyclodextrin derivatives, or both are (1) added to the aqueous solution prior to or during the free radical polymerization; (2) applied onto a hydrogel of the polymer; (3) applied to or on the dried polymer; (4) applied to or on the surface crosslinked, dried polymer; or (5) applied to or on the surface of the dried polymer during crosslinking.

40. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 39, wherein the cyclodextrins or cyclodextrin derivatives are added or applied as a solid or as a solution.

41. (Previously Presented) A method comprising

absorbing aqueous fluids with a composition according to Claim 23.

42. (Previously Presented) A process comprising

absorbing an active substance onto the composition according to Claim 23, and then releasing the active substrate.

43. (Previously Presented) A process of stabilizing an active substance, comprising absorbing the active substance with the polymer composition according to Claim 23.

44. (Previously Presented) In a hygiene article, wherein the improvement comprises an absorbent comprising the composition of Claim 23.